



News of the BSN company, its ships and staff, its history and *histoires*, of ships and sealing wax, nautical natters, maritime miscellanies and swinging of lanterns

## FROM THE EDITOR...

Your Editor is often thought of as a totally apolitical creature - although he does occasionally admit to an anarchic sense of humour. But he has a growing frustration at the 'de-personalising' of modern business life, at the increase of amorphous company structures, where the balance sheet rules all and 'businessmen' is another name for accountants. Imagine his pleasure then when he alighted on an item in that most excellent of magazines, 'Sea Breezes', which sent echoes of fellow feeling coursing through his veins - if that's not mixing a metaphor too far. With kind permission of the publisher of 'Sea Breezes', Captain Hamish Ross, we carry the article in full in this issue under "From the Heart".

In an entirely different strand, your Editor has discovered **another** British India! Whilst searching indefatigably for more references to our favourite shipping company with which to titillate our jaded palates, he came upon a mention of British India's guillotine! Intrigued, he dug deeper. Fear not, dear reader, it isn't the ultimate Superintendent's sanction after all. For this British India turns out to be an Australian rock band specialising in garage music (whatever that may be) and this was one of their albums. We breathe a little easier - although the band members have been described as 'high school social misfits! Strike a chord?



We were very pleased to receive the following letter after the writer saw a note about "...calling BI" in *Sea Breezes* magazine. Eddy Valentine writes "Both my late dad and also my great grandfather sailed with BI as engineers. Dad 1932 to 45, great grandfather I am not sure, but I reckon 1860s or 70s, both were from Montrose in Angus. Dad sailed on Aronda, Bandra, Bulimba, Dilwara, Dalgoma, Mashobra, Matiana, Mati Hari, Nevasa, Warfield and other vessels of the BI fleet, but I think his happiest times were with Bulimba and Mati Hari out of Singapore. Great Grandfather I do not know. My grandfather was also a master mariner, but not with BI, whilst my youngest daughter was with the RN for eight years on HMS *Exeter* and HMS *Liverpool*, I don't think the granddads would have approved! Myself, I had a share in a small fishing boat for a number of years. I live near Montrose and take a very strong interest in shipping matters". Good to hear from you, Eddy.

We also thank several others for their contribution to this issue - not the least, ex-Marconi man David Hammond, who not only gives us another page or two from his little black book, but for a couple of photos as well.

Your Editor also places you on notice that the 60th anniversary of *Uganda's* launch comes up in January next year and we want appropriate stories, photographs and the like.

## FROM THE SUBSCRIPTION Dept...

Our young-girl-wot-duz (frequently, I'm told) has thrust an email from a new subscriber into your Editor's hands, demanding that we "put this nice man's letter into the paper". Not being one to argue with Tracey when she's in this mood, herewith from Eoin Bruce - "For your information, I was BI sea staff by relation. I was employed by FC Strick Line when P & O formed the GCD. P & O then decided that I was brave enough to face and work with BI personnel".

"My initial indoctrination began as Chief Officer when, late 1974, I joined *Morvada* renamed *Strathmore*. This was followed by the *Strathmay* (formerly *Manora*) and there I met Jock Sturrock, C/E, a man whom I came to admire and respect who also had a great BI influence on my life. Next was *Strathardle* where the BI brain washing continued with the late Captain Stan Turk and many others. Back to *Strathmore* where the late Captain Duncan Raine and Alex Hay C/E ensured my BI education

continued - 'We didn't work on our ships, WE LIVED ON THEM'. My BI education was completed when I did two spells on *Dwarka* punctuated by a contract on *Strathmay*". "During these spells, I came in contact with my good friend, John Smith, C/E. I visit John every Friday. Sadly he is bedridden and is slowly approaching the Bar. Hopefully this coming Friday I will be joined by another BI man, Tom McKnight 2/E. This explanation is to demonstrate that although I don't have BI blood running through my veins, I can consider myself as BI - if John Smith says "yes", well, that's good enough for me. Incidentally, I have crew lists of the ships I sailed on. Kind regards, Eoin". Eoin, you're one of us!

Other new subscribers are Ivan Herbert and Chris Lovelidge, Canada; Arthur Christie in the Shetland Isles; Fred Kelkar and David Brown, USA; Richard Wright, Australia; Marie Candlish (nee Groom), Robert Bleakley, Mick Charlton, Allan Windle and Ian Aldous, all from UK; Peter Lankow, Germany and Ken McIlroy, Bangor. Lady and gentlemen, you are amongst friends - welcome. And thanks for your various potted biographies.

To send in your views, notes, photos, brickbats or spare gold bars, please click on any "...callingBI" logo

## FROM THE SCRAPBOOK...

Our scrap book in our last issue contained this intriguing little example of the coiffeur's art. We've managed to identify the barber at last, with the help of John Pinder via Fred Waddington in France. Apparently the two of them sailed with Sweeney Todd on the *Sir Bedivere* and they better know him as Trevor Rose, a 5th engineer. But just who his victim, sorry, client is we have yet to determine. Did he survive to tell the tale? Does anybody know?

But whilst we are on things *Chindwara*, your Editor just couldn't resist this picture of a hookah in the cadets' dormitory. Wake up at the back, I said hookah. We are sure that the contents are totally innocent and legal, but the imbiber does seem to be, er, 'enjoying' the experience, if that's the word! Perhaps he would like to write in and explain himself...



## FROM THE HEART...

*Your Editor read recently an article by Peter Murphy, a Master Mariner turned lawyer which seemed to encapsulate many of the conversations that he has had with many of his contemporaries. We make no apology for reproducing here in full.*

My own era at sea is now long gone and with it the colourful life and the professional satisfaction that was the birthright, at least so we thought, of seafarers in the sixties and seventies.

From Rosario to Rangoon, Cape Town to Colombo, Santos to Singapore and Montreal to Sydney, we journeyed across the oceans of the world to foreign ports that in those days were exciting, exotic, removed from the daily newspapers and full of hustle and bustle, colour and intrigue. We often spent long times in port, sometimes amounting to weeks rather than days and with large complements of highly trained and professional European officers and crews from India, China, Hong Kong and of course the British Isles. The ships that I sailed on were not only a workplace, but a "home from home" and our social environment. This was our life and when we went to sea, it was with the envy of those that we left behind for whom the far flung ports of the world were mere names, conjured from the ether with a mystical twist and an intrigue that left people less lucky than us, with a faraway look in their eyes.

Those were the days of the infancy of television and some of the sights that we saw when we arrived in ports such as Mombasa, Port Louis, Bombay and Kobe, were only now being seen by people at home from the comfort of their lounge rooms. Those were the days when there was a strong social and legal connection with the shipowner. Those were the days of the professional shipowner, the man who knew the ins and outs of the business of shipping. Of course I do not wish to insinuate here that the shipowner was a philanthropist in anyway, but he was a father figure and we were proud to be classified as British India, Cunard, Ellermans, P&O, Port Line, Shaw Savill or Union Castle men. We belonged to the shipowner and we were proud to sail on his ships, which were our homes and it was to the shipowner and his shore staff that we turned for support. He was the man to whom we willingly gave our careers and in turn received a large amount of both professional and personal satisfaction from serving onboard his ships.

Those were the days when cabin doors were rarely closed, when curtains or jalousie doors were pulled across and alleyways echoed with laughter or talking or the chink of glasses and the sound of the radio.

Those were the days of the large crews, when vessels commonly had fifty and sixty persons onboard and more. When officers wore uniforms and caps, instead of boiler suits and



## FROM THE HEART... (contd)

hard hats and the crew wore the insignia of the company for which they worked. They were Company men and on the Indian crew ships on which I sailed for part of my time at sea, the crews were completely fitted out by the shipowner's stores and were proud of their heritage in his service.

There was a real professionalism and a pride in being at sea in those days and despite the fact that we were away from home for months at a time and sometimes a year or more, there never seemed to be the urgency to get home. We had different values then and with no easy access to the world except by air, where fares were beyond the reach of most ordinary people, seafaring provided an honourable and exciting career, a profession for young people keen to see the world and participate in a distinct way of life.

This was before the so-called "information age" and when container ships were in their infancy; when we had radio officers and used Morse code and the internet had never been heard of. It was a time when leisure and pleasure and good times both at sea and in port could be counted upon.

I certainly do not want to paint a picture of a seagoing career being a panacea for all ills - it was not, though I do remember the first ship that I ever joined on a bleak and windy, rain-swept day at Jarrow on the river Tyne. We were bound for "Lands End for orders" and the ship, which had just come out of dry-dock, was to put it mildly in a state of chaos, something that was clearly of concern to the Master and the Chief Officer.

For me joining my first ship and full of trepidation and anxiety, things looked more confusing than I had ever imagined and I wondered how on earth I would learn anything at all. I found much to my surprise that half of our deck crew, who looked to be young desperados, had made a wise choice in coming to sea. It was either that or Borstal and with the promise a long trip to the Far East, as the favoured destination, their only concern seemed to be to leave the Tyne behind as quickly as possible, before The Authorities changed their minds!

As it happened, we received orders to load grain at Buenos Aires and Rosario in Argentina for Shanghai. It was in Rosario that I first became acquainted with the comradeship, pastoral care and social activity that for many years characterised the memories that I took with me of the "Missions to Seafarers", or as it was known in those days, the "Flying Angel Club" - regardless of whether they were in fact the "Flying Angel" or the Catholic "Stella Maris" we knew them simply as the Mission. They were havens for us seafarers and especially as deck apprentices with little or no money to spend. We were always sure of finding company and a friendly atmosphere at the Mission. But that was before the "information age", before the time when being away for months at a time did not really impact so heavily on one's life, for it was part and parcel of that life. Now, dare I say it, being away for a matter of days can be a difficult experience and unless one is required and unless one is equipped with a mobile telephone and laptop computer to access email, one feels naked and strangely disadvantaged. The days of leisurely port time, when the Mission would organise outings for us to the bush or down the coast, when dances and other social functions were *de rigueur* have long since gone. Many of the people that I sailed with met their partners

or their wives through the social functions organised through the Mission. We used to wait with growing anticipation as the ship drew close to land after many weeks at sea for the social outings and evenings ashore for the coming week, or weeks depending on the cargo situation.

Those were the days when there was no hurry to get off to the town on the first night, although it was always great to change into 'civvies' and stroll down the gangway to feel solid ground once more. There were days and more often weeks to look forward to, when one could visit the Mission to make a phone call home, have a beer, read magazines and newspapers, meet old friends and make new ones and go for a stroll into the town.

So what has changed I ask you? The first thing that has changed is of course, the face of shipping itself.

Almost overnight, with the emergence of container and inter-modal shipping, the world of seafaring changed and ships and fleets were decimated in the rush to containerise, such that since the age of sail, there has never been a greater revolution in shipping. Hand in glove with the technological explosion came the demise of the old ship owning companies and the intrinsic interest, financial, social and commercial, in the ships that they had operated and the crews that they employed. Investors, interested in a vehicle for financial return only, took over the shipowner's role. This type of person is not interested in his ships or their crews other than as an investment vehicle. The emergence of the ship management company to fill the void left by the shipping companies broke asunder the links once forged between ship and crew and owner as the management of fleets was carried out at "arm's length".

As well as these changes, a revolution developed in terms of the crewing of ships and almost overnight western crews were replaced by crews from the developing countries of South East Asia at a fraction of the cost. Economies of scale unheard of in the days of traditional cargo shipping came about as crews were ruthlessly depleted to operate container vessels and the golden opportunity to reduce manning and maintenance costs, were fully exploited by the new owners and operators and their managers. With the rapid emergence of containerisation and larger ships, massive new infrastructure and a need for vast areas for container parks, led to inner city port areas gradually becoming disused and seafarers got pushed further and further away from the bright lights of the City.

There is now no link between the seafarer and his shipowner, except in a very few cases and this has had a major impact on the welfare and social health of ship's crews. The days that I described earlier of open cabin doors and a friendly beer at hand, have gone and those of you who have occasion to board modern ships will know what I mean when I say that for the most part they are empty, soulless places, with unimaginative, sterile looking alleyways and firmly closed doors. The average ship's crew is so small now that social life onboard is virtually non-existent. On many of the ships that I used to visit as a lawyer, there were three, if not more nationalities and languages spoken onboard. All of these people came from different cultures, different ethnic backgrounds and had different



## FROM THE HEART... (contd)

social mores, which made for a complex and highly fragmented workplace.

But the ship is not just a workplace as I have tried to point out. It is at the same time, a complex machine, a means of transport, a home and a social system, with the link between the ship and its country of registry barely visible except in terms of the flag that it flies. A web of complex arrangements obscures the identity of the shipowner and it is the ship manager as his go-between that the crew turns to in times of trouble - often with little result.

An average sized container vessel now carries more in a single voyage than an average sized vessel did in a year when I was at sea and at speeds across the ocean that were barely dreamed of, even for regular liner services. When such a ship reaches port, there are none of the preparations for shore-going such as used to take place on our ships, where our shore gear was carefully removed from lockers and brushed and aired, ready for that tantalising "First Run up the Road!"

Whatever the problems ashore maybe with the breakdown of family values, high divorce rates, drugs and alcohol, at sea those things (except perhaps for drugs and alcohol, now deeply frowned upon as a result of safety management crackdowns) are magnified tenfold.

Whatever uncertainties life ashore holds for us, life at sea holds more and with no clear cut career structure and no promise of being able to rejoin another ship, the pressure on seafarers is far greater I would suggest than it ever was. Paradoxically, the attitude to hard drugs when I was at sea was strangely at odds with that of alcohol that was so freely available.

Now apart from a lack of time in port, there are very small crews onboard a modern ship, a polyglot mix, with language and other problems engendered by different nationalities and a high level of boredom. The reliance on technology to such a massive degree has largely reduced the job of seafaring to a monitoring role in much the same way as an aircraft pilot, but with a vital difference. The pilot flies his aircraft from A to B and rarely spends more than twelve hours in the air and in such cases there will always be a second flight crew onboard. When he reaches his destination, he leaves his aircraft behind and is whisked away to stay at a comfortable hotel.

Admittedly now not for very long, but he is out of his workplace environment and able to relax.

Not so the crew of a modern ship. When they arrive in port, the level of work, especially for the Master and his officers increases, with agents, customs, security, lawyers, terminal operators and stevedores all cramming onboard to "have time with him" in the very short period that the ship is in port. All this and the master may well have been on the bridge for some 8-12 hours prior to arrival - especially in heavy weather conditions and/or fog. There is little, if any opportunity to go ashore and most container terminals are now sited far from the centres of the cities after which they are named. For the crew, due to their small numbers, they too are restricted by the long working hours and the limited time in port. Apart from that, the distance to the "bright lights" of the city, as ships increasingly berth in more remote locations, makes travel too expensive and almost impossible.

The level of confusion and loneliness onboard through a multiracial crew, the feeling of isolation being in port,

but at a berth such a long way from anywhere, the costs of travelling to "somewhere" - especially for third world crews from South East Asia and China, visiting Australia, or Europe or the USA, are far and away above the scope of the wages they earn, which nevertheless may be higher than they would ever be able to get in a shore based job in their country. Long hours and low morale, with seafarers away from their families for many, many months, are a recipe for disaster and despite the intentions of conventions such as ILO 147 and ILO 163, the ability to enforce these vague legal platitudes is in many cases purely illusory.

Shipping is a highly cut-throat, commercial venture and vessel safety depends on a vessel's crew. Technology has advanced to such a stage now, that 90% of all accidents at sea are caused by human factors, factors that impact on the recognition and importance of seafarers as people, not just commercial rights and interests to be bartered away. How they feel, how they are treated, how healthy they are.... fatigue, hunger, anxiety, despair, anger, humiliation and boredom are all matters reducing the effectiveness therefore the ultimate safety of the ship on which they are serving.

Surely protecting seafarer's rights and looking after their social welfare must be the best way to promote safety and thereby the safe commercial adventure of the voyage? Shipping is preoccupied, I venture to say with the commercial, rather than the humanitarian aspects of seafaring and with tight port schedules, poor communications amongst those onboard and lack of visibility, despite International Conventions and legislation, seafarer's rights have been allowed to be subsumed beneath the weight of so-called "more important issues". But it is the seafarers who operate the ships, partaking in a highly technical and demanding life which, for all of its difference, requires special skills, just as we did when we were at sea, who should be the major recipients of concern.

This is the environment that we now face, but the challenge as I see it is to overcome the problem of seafarers being "out of sight out of mind" and bring them and their increasingly depressing social situation back into the spotlight of the public forum.

"The sea has not altered nor have the fundamental nautical principles, but the ship herself has undergone radical change, the methods of propulsion, equipment, communication, maintenance and control have altered so much that a different kind of knowledge and handcraft is now required from the seaman who aspires to executive position."

Those words are as apt today, as when they were first written. They come from the opening chapter of my own copy of Nicholls Seamanship and Nautical Knowledge, for Second Mates, Mates and Masters Certificates and refer to a time in 1959 prior to one of the most sweeping commercial and sociological changes in the maritime world - the advent of containerisation and intermodal carriage of goods by sea.

In addressing the need to lift basic performance requirements, Lord Donaldson, in the report of his enquiry into shipping, "Safer Ships and Cleaner Seas" stated that



## FROM THE HEART... (contd)

"traditional values of good management competence, operational practice and maintenance have to some extent slipped away..."

In the wake of such high profile disasters as the Exxon Valdez and the tragic loss of life on the Herald of Free Enterprise, Scandinavia Star and the Estonia, the focus has switched from ship to shore.

For lawyers the idea of a "Company" being a person is not a new concept, but for others in the maritime world, it comes as something of a novelty. It was at the enquiry into the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise that the court first homed in on the directing mind of the company, as opposed to the Master.

With the damaging oil spill from the Pacific Adventurer in March 2009 and almost a year later the disastrous grounding of the Shen Neng 1 off Gladstone occupying the attention of the Queensland and Australian Commonwealth authorities, the words of the House of Lords Select Committee in 1992 stated what to many seamen is a truism:

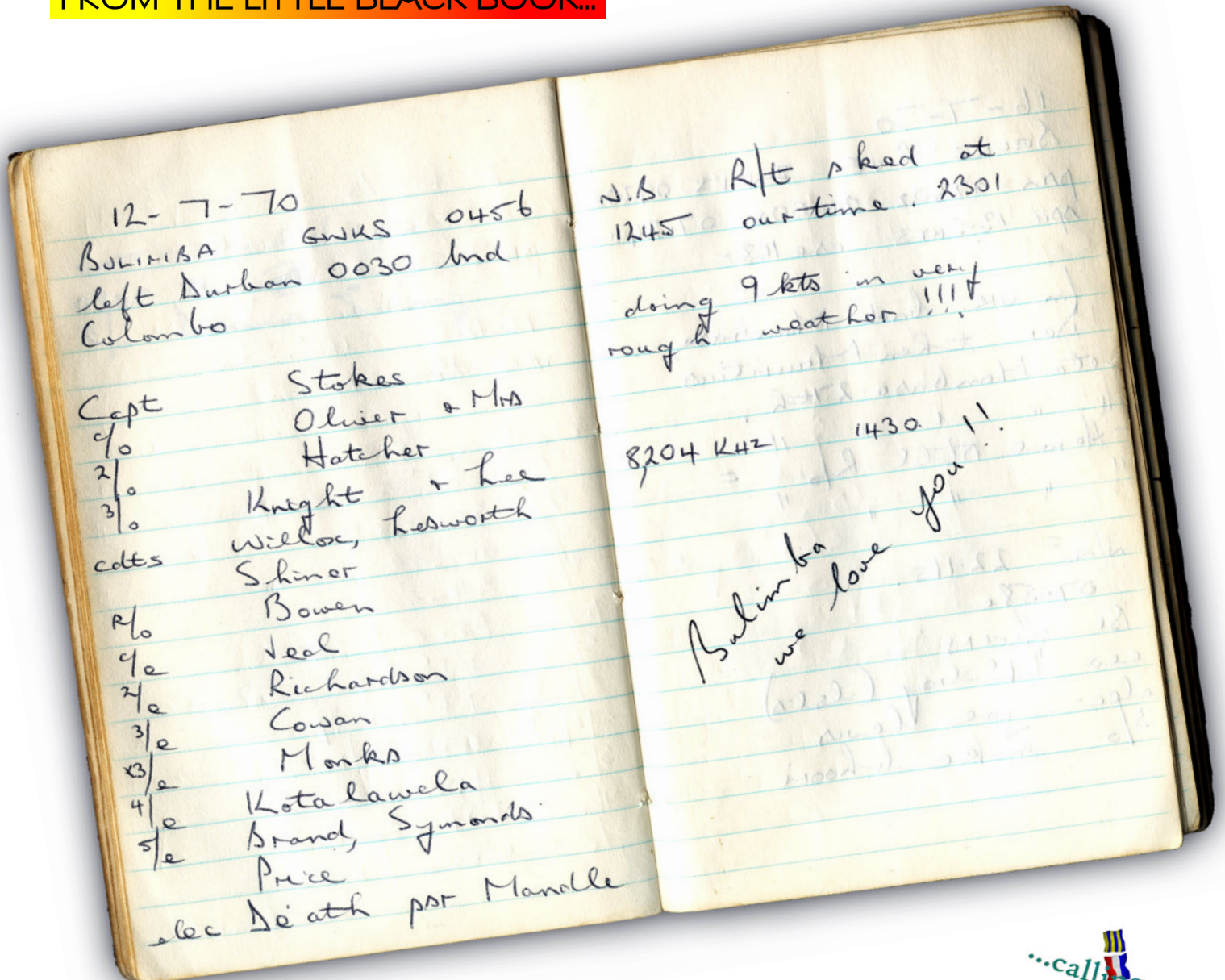
"Seafaring has always been a dangerous business. The surface of the sea is a uniquely corrosive and violent environment, unpredictable and ever changing..."

Although undoubtedly in the near past the Master's authority has undergone severe erosion and with it the confidence and self-esteem so necessary to command, the provisions of the international codes such as the International Management Code (ISM Code) - made mandatory at a SOLAS Convention in May 1994, which embraces the company as well as the ship, have provided positive support.



*About the author: Peter Murphy is an internationally recognised maritime lawyer. After serving his apprenticeship with the South American Saint Line, Peter obtained his Master Mariner's Foreign Going Certificate in London in 1970. His sea-going career spanned over 20 years and he served in numerous types of vessels, including general cargo, reefer, passenger liners, tankers and offshore supply vessels. Peter also served with such notable companies as Ellermans and the Union Castle Line.*

## FROM THE LITTLE BLACK BOOK...



## FROM THE WAROONGA...

Thanks to Paul Mann for this insight into life on board *Waroonga*:

The chaps at play - (reclining is Jimmy MacMillan 4/E/O, Roy Pawley, Elec/O, Me, Purser, Jim Young 3/O) off the *Waroonga* in 1963 or 64 ashore in ties, me in plastic mac.

The size of the glasses indicates Australia, probably Coogie. Jim Mac last I heard of was in the sixties gone ashore to start a family in Glasgow. The JEO at the end and not named is best forgotten because I think he was on watch when the steam turbine was opened up when we were tied up alongside turning engines in Dunkirk. At daybreak the ship parted all lines and steamed ahead, bounced off a German ship then continued on (or off) course to cut in two a lived-in barge at the end of the dock. The man and wife on board the barge saw a large ship steaming directly at them and sensibly leapt to safety ashore before their home sank. The *Waroonga*'s bows were bent back but we sailed OK later on for Hull. It is only hearsay and my memory is dreadful but before breakfast Captain Bidmead went on the bridge, to switch on the convertor which powered the radio in his cabin,

and to his surprise he discovered the ship was going ahead. Trying to steer the vessel he found there was no power on the steering gear. He rang the Chief Engineer to tell him the ship was underway. The Chief said that there was power on the main engine if that was any help? "That seems to be the trouble, Chief," said Bidmead.



Thanks, Paul. We are now forced to ask if this little incident was before or after that decorous night. But definitely it was after your Editor's time on that fine ship.

## FROM THE COMPETITION DEPT....

Our latest picture in our popular series of "Where are we now?" pictures clearly had some of you guessing. John King struck out for the obvious, saying "it wasn't South Shields", but we don't think that's quite enough to guarantee

a prize. There are better contenders. Frank Ayers, for instance, reckoned it "certainly looks familiar, would it be the dockyard or mission pool in Singapore", whereas Geoff Woodland had a stab at the British Club in Basrah, before embarking on a highly unlikely tale about talcum powder and the Hollywood Bowl Massage Parlour in Port Swettenham, over which



we should probably draw a veil. But Ted Treacher wins this month's prize for his guess of the Mariners Club in that city (now known as Port Klang).

Thanks to Tony Lister for this month's picture, which is perhaps a little easier - and we wonder what fanciful tales you can come up with this time! And don't forget, look out those shoe boxes in the loft for any more suitable pictures for this section.

## FROM THE SHIP DESIGN Dept...

Coincidentally, we have received two communications about ships' general arrangement plans. The first was from Mr Lyle Craigie-Halkett, who wrote in after seeing a reference to "...calling BI" in *Sea Breezes* magazine. He says "I am a retired seafarer and at the age of 69 still maintain a profound interest in ships and shipping. My background may be a little different to many, as I originate from the Falkland Islands, and joined my first ship which was a local steamer called Darwin in 1957, followed by several years with the British Antarctic Survey. Later I served with many shipping companies sadly no longer with us, such as

Union Castle, Watts Watts and Blue Star etc. I am afraid I did not serve on any BI ships but certainly saw many of the fleet during my travels".

"As a matter of fact, only yesterday I was given a drawing or G.A. of a class of ship built to

Government Specification. This one in particular is War Gazelle, and was managed by Watts Watts. BI had about 16 or 17 of the same design, initially with names like *War Lance* (later *Hatipara*), *Gharinda*, *War Peahen*, *Gandara*, *War Owl*, *Golconda* and so on. What has surprised me is that looking at the various pictures that are available on the internet, I was sure they were the usual 3 Island 5 hold cargo vessels, but soon noticed that what I thought was No 3 hold behind the bridge was not designated as a cargo hold at all, with much smaller hatch coamings, but served by two derricks and a single winch with extended



drum ends (presumably for yard & stay work or slewing)".

"Therefore my question is, if all the 'G' class were like this, do you or your readers recall if this smaller hatch and hold was solely for the use of bunker coal and perhaps ships stores or was general cargo carried there on occasion? Certainly BI were well known as bullion carriers and perhaps that area was used if they had a particularly valuable consignment. However I recall looking at P & O cargo vessels from the same period, and they carried such cargo in the aft hatches, as did Elder Dempsters".

In much the same vein, Tony Smythe wrote into the Bishop message board about a salvage operation to recover silver bullion from the *Gairsoppa*. He says: As you may recall, I salvaged many plans of BI ships in 1971 to save them from the rubbish bin.

Among them I have capacity plans for eight of the old "G" class, including one of *Gairsoppa*. As you know, capacity plans usually show only an inboard profile with little info as to the accommodation. The one I have for *Gairsoppa*, scale one sixteenth of an inch to a foot, includes the usual capacities of tanks, holds, etc, but only shows a profile. However, it is probably unique, and could be better than nothing. I am somewhat loathe to part with it, I have had some bitter experiences in helping people about BI ships and never getting documents back, etc."

It would seem that that Mr Craigie Halkett has a point, but can any reader verify or expand on this?



## FROM THE BIKER BOYS ...

Your Editor is anything but infallible, as was proven in his description of the biker boys outing in our last edition of "...calling BI". He placed their outing in North Wales, but he was rightly taken to task by Chris Wright (he in the day-glo jacket) who wrote in to say that "the venue was not North Wales but Devils Bridge, near Kirby Lonsdale up here in Cumbria, a great meeting place for all serious bikers".

"And don't forget that the Royal Enfield (500cc Bullet Electra, 2008) of mine was built in Madras, that great BI watering hole".

"After a brew at Devil's, I took Brian and James



on a nice little run through the Cumbria/Yorkshire dales via Dent and onto Ribbleshead and the Station Inn".

"I had come over from Barrow-in-Furness, where I have lived now for just on forty years, that once great shipbuilding town of Orient Line favourites (and of course Britain's only nuclear submarine builders where I spent 29 great years) and Brian and James over from Rochdale over in north east Lancashire".

Who's going to argue with that? Not your editor. Chris also says that his birthday is, in fact, in July when he will be 71 - but he couldn't be at the northern mini-reunion in Manchester to celebrate it, as he will be in Canada. No doubt pounding along the turnpike. Have a great one, Chris!



## FROM THE SOCIAL CALENDAR

They are fey folk, those BI East Anglians, but they couldn't quite get their timing right to coincide their latest gathering with the summer solstice - missing it by a day or two. But they did pay due obeisance to the brewer's art at their regular, The Thatcher's Arms in Mount Bures, recently.

Shown in the photograph are Barbara Sanderson, John and Jean Hughes, John Rees (who shielded his good lady Eunice from the prying lens of your Editor), Barry Sanderson, Rita Johnson, Alan Myers, Mike King and Mike Wheeler. Reports that your Editor was seen sporting a Druidic robe are wide of the mark. Prescott had earlier sent apologies from France, engaged in trying to make a Gaulloise



Meanwhile, our northern *confreres* were gathering at their favourite watering hole. Dave Mitchell reports: "The 8th annual summer lunchtime meeting for any ex-BI staff in the north of England who can make it was held at Waxy O'Connor's

Bar, The Print Works, Manchester on Thursday, 23rd June. Although not a record turn out, fourteen arrived in good time for lunch to enjoy the usual reminiscences and easily spotted tall stories. On a serious note, the recent letter in Sea Breezes re the loss of the *Dara* provoked much comment.

Left to right, standing or seated: Mike Feltham, Mike Ousby, John Quinn, John Pinder, John Leigh, Ken Beadle, Brian Warburton, Tony Lister, Peter Fielding and Lew Bain.

Below table: Brian Walker, Jim Slater, David Mitchell and Arthur Dawson.



reeking mechanic understand that modern cars can't just be fixed with a few strips of duct tape - "ah, je suis desolee, m'sieu". John Hughes hadn't seen your Editor since they sailed together on the *Tairea* in 1972 and Mike King last encountered him on the *Uganda* in 1968! Time did not diminish the tall tales and a good time was had by all.

